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Economic and Social Council

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Organizational session for 2008

Provisional summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 8 February 2008, at 4 p.m.

President: Mr. Mérorès ..... (Haiti)

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Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

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08-23034 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*) (E/2008/2 and E/2008/L.1)

1. **The President** drew the Council's attention to the draft proposals contained in document E/2008/L.1, submitted by the President and members of the Bureau on the basis of informal consultations.

Draft decision V: Theme for the 2008 thematic discussion of the Economic and Social Council

2. **Mr. Hoscheit** (Luxembourg) said that the proposed theme for the 2008 thematic discussion, which has been agreed upon during informal consultations, was the following: "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current challenges".

3. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to adopt the aforementioned theme proposed for the 2008 thematic discussion.

4. *It was so decided.*

5. **Ms. Ghosh** (Observer for Slovenia), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the agreement reached on the 2008 thematic discussion and the flexibility shown by all those involved. At the same time, the European Union believed that the periodicity of the thematic discussion should be re-examined in the future with a view to further strengthening the Council, increasing the participation of ministers throughout the high-level segment and balancing the workload between New York and Geneva.

6. **Mr. Blake** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the agreement on the need for thematic discussions in principle. However, in order for thematic discussions to be meaningful in practice, it was also important that such discussions should address current challenges as and when they arose. In that context, the documentation being prepared for the discussion of rural development should also address the current financial crisis that had arisen. Lastly, since thematic discussions provided a framework that enabled the Council to take any major developments into account, a debate on their periodicity was not likely to prove useful.

7. **Mr. Heidt** (United States of America) said that the broad term "current challenges" could encompass a number of different financial issues. Since there was little documented evidence that the current financial market instability in developed countries would have a direct impact on markets in developing countries, the Secretariat should maintain its focus on areas with a more demonstrated direct link to rural development issues.

8. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin) emphasized that the Council should hold thematic discussions every year and that there was no need to discuss the issue of their periodicity.

9. **The President** informed the Council that, in the light of the explanations provided by the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Hoscheit of Luxembourg, and the decision just adopted, the discussion on "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development", called for in decision 2007/213, would thus take place during the high-level segment of the Council's 2008 substantive session.

Draft decision VII: Theme for the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2008 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council

10. **The President** said that he had invited the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Kim Hyun Chong of the Republic of Korea, to conduct informal consultations on the theme for the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2008 substantive session of the Council. Once the relevant recommendations had been provided for the Council's consideration, Mr. Kim would be in a position to convene informal consultations on the theme.

Draft decision VIII: Theme for the item on regional cooperation of the 2008 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council

11. **The President** said he took it that the Council agreed that the theme for the item on regional cooperation of the 2008 substantive session should be "The regional dimension of the themes of the high-level segment for 2008".

12. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.